

REMARKS

The title of the application has been changed. In addition, claims 37, 38, and 40-42 have been amended; claim 39 has been cancelled; and claims 44-54 have been newly added. Claims 37, 38, and 40-54 are now pending in the application. Applicants respectfully request reexamination and reconsideration of the application in light of the amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 37-42 have been rejected as indefinite under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph. Applicants have made clarifying amendments to the claims and request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 37-42 have also been rejected as anticipated by or obvious in view of US Patent No. 5,513,430 to Yanof et al. ("Yanof"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Generally speaking, independent claims 37 and 44 both describe forming tip structures on a substrate, joining the tip structures to contact structures, and releasing the tip structures from the substrate. Nothing in Yanof teaches or fairly suggests the foregoing. Therefore, independent claims 37 and 44 and their dependent claims patentably distinguish over Yanof.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believe that a discussion with Applicants' attorney would be helpful, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (925) 456-3915.

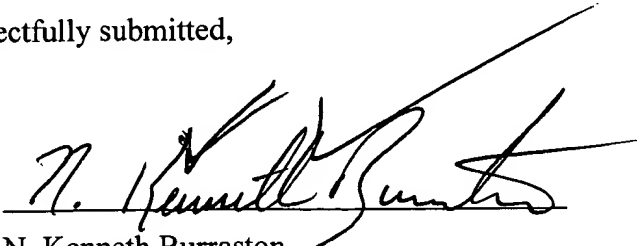
As a final note, Applicants note that two Information Disclosures Statements were filed: one on March 8, 2002, and the other on July 9, 2002. Neither 1449 form has been initialed and returned, however. Applicants request that both 1449 forms be initialed and returned.

Although Applicants believes that all necessary extensions of time have been requested and fees have been authorized in papers filed herewith, Applicants hereby petition the Director for any extension of time deemed necessary for acceptance of this paper, and Applicants authorize the Director to charge any fee due in connection with the filing of this paper to Deposit Account No. 50-0285 (order no. P6D2-US).

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 37, 38, and 40-42 have been amended as follows:

37. (Twice Amended) Method of fabricating tip structures for ends of contact structures, comprising:

depositing at least one layer of at least one conductive material on a surface of a substrate;

depositing a layer of masking material atop the at least one conductive layer;

patterning openings in the masking material;

depositing at least one layer of at least one conductive tip material into the openings,
forming tip structures; [and]

removing the masking material;

joining the tip structures to contact structures; and

releasing the tip structures from the substrate.

38. (Amended) Method, according to claim 37, further comprising:

depositing a joining material on the at least one layer of at least one conductive tip material previously deposited in the openings.

40. (Amended) Method, according to claim [39] 37, wherein:

the contact structures are resilient contact structures.

41. (Amended) Method, according to claim [39] 37, wherein:

the contact structures are composite interconnection elements.

42. (Amended) Method, according to claim [39] 37, wherein:

the contact structures are resilient contact structures disposed atop a space transformer of a probe card assembly.